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A SECOND

LETTER

TO THE

REVD. JOHN BLAIR LINN, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,

IN REPLY TO HIS DEFENCE OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST AND ATONEMENT.

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S. &c.

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1803.

LETTER

TO THE

REVD. JOHN FLAVEL, LYNN [illegible]

PASTOR OF THE [illegible]

A

SECOND LETTER

TO THE

REVD. JOHN BLAIR LINN, D. D. &c.

TO THE REVD. DR. LINN,

REVD. SIR,

YOUR reply to my Letter anſwered my expectation in ſome reſpects, but not in others. Conviction, with reſpect to any thing of much conſequence, I did not expect to produce; but I looked for an acknowledgment of ſome ſlight overſights, and more candour with reſpect to myſelf and my motives in writing. You do not, however, acknowledge the ſmalleſt overſight, and through the whole of your letter you repreſent me as acting in a very diſingenuous manner, uſing much artifice in the defence of what you ſuppoſe

I muſt know to be incapable of defence, and thereby deceiving and misleading my readers.

You call, p. 11, the account that I gave of my object in writing "an ingenious evaſion, to avoid an acknow-"ledgment, which I muſt otherwiſe have been forced "to make. By artfully interweaving certain clauſes in "a general ſentence," with which you charge me p. 96, you ſay that "an experienced diſputant deceives "and miſleads the unwary. I wiſh," you ſay p. 40, "you had followed a courſe which was open and direct, "and which does not wind like the labyrinth in Crete. "I wiſh your path had been marked by candour, "as well as by ingenuity, and that you had rather "grappled me with the irons of truth, than thrown a-"round me the web of perplexity." You ſpeak, p. 96, of "the common and miſchievous artifices of the "Socinians in their ſmall tracts, intended to influence the "public mind," meaning, no doubt, my own in particular. You ſuppoſe in one caſe, p. 15, that "I deceive in "order that good might be produced;" but this you very properly ſay is not juſtifiable. In ſhort, you aſſert, p. 52, that "it may be ſaid of me that I write againſt "light, and better knowledge."

I do not queſtion your ſincerity, or regard to truth, as you do mine; and therefore I muſt believe that you really entertain theſe ſentiments of me. But then what ſignifies the reſpect you profeſs to have for me p. 86, as a *philoſopher* and a *ſcholar*, when you have this low and deſpicable opinion of me as a *man*. And how could you ſay, "p 1. I cannot but expreſs a wiſh that our free intercourſe "of opinions which has paſſed may rather promote har-

"mony

"mony than diſcord; when, if I be the perſon you deſcribe, you would diſgrace yourſelf by any harmony with me.

You ſay, indeed, p. 86, that, "in looking over your "Letter you find ſeveral paſſages which will be thought 'by ſome improperly harſh;" but you do not ſay that you think ſo yourſelf, and you add, that you meant not by "them to offend me." After, in fact, calling me a knave, only in more decent language, you ſay, "you "hope I ſhall not take it amiſs." But how could you expect that ſuch treatment would not give offence, and that I ſhould not take it amiſs? Having, however been much uſed to language of this kind, both in England and here, I think I can bear it as well as moſt perſons, let it come from what quarter it will. But I did not expect it from you. Only make the caſe your own, and ſuppoſe that I had repreſented you as acting the diſingenuous part that you aſcribe to me, and being conſcious, as I am, that you did not deſerve it, what would you have felt under the imputation?

It is very poſſible, however, that notwithſtanding all that you have ſaid againſt me as a controverſial writer, you may have no bad opinion of my morals in other reſpects; ſo that, tho' I may not be honeſt as a writer, I may be ſo in the common tranſactions of life, and not be deſtitute of other good qualities. And tho' I think you uncandid with reſpect to me, I can excuſe the too common feelings and language of controverſy, and I do not infer from it any thing unfavourable to your general character, which I doubt not is honourable, and your general conduct exemplary. The *harmony*, there-

fore, that you ſpeak of, whatever be meant by it, will not meet with any obſtacle from me. We have all our infirmities, and, as chriſtians, ſhould bear with each other. I, as the older man, ought to have the moſt candour, and make the moſt allowance for the greater irritability of youth. If you can bear this anſwer to your letter, you will eaſily bear any thing that will ever come from me.

You Sir, cannot, in conſiſtency with what you have advanced, believe me; but many perſons, who are better acquainted with my character and my writings will, when I ſay that I hold the conduct you deſcribe in as much deteſtation as you can. If I know my own heart, I write from a love of truth, and a deſire to promote it, and I believe that you do the ſame, tho' labouring under prejudices from which my different ſituation and opportunities of better information have, through the conduct of a kind providence, delivered me. So at leaſt I think, and for this I am truly thankful, and eſpecially that I have been the inſtrument in the hands of God of enlightning the minds of many others.

Much as I have written to demonſtrate the truth and the importance of chriſtianity, both with reſpect to individuals and ſociety (more I believe than any man living) you inſinuate that my views are hoſtile to it when you ſay p. 35, "Did you mean to deny the bleſſ-" ed effects of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt upon ſociety, " and upon human government," and when you enlarge as you do on that topic yourſelf in your Letter to me. Indeed Sir, I do not want your inſtructions on this head. Few men living, perhaps none, have had more

opportunity

opportunity of knowing unbelievers of all kinds than myſelf, or have given more attention to their principles, and the effects of them. This has given me a much ſtronger impreſſion than you can poſſibly have of the real value of revelation; becauſe your advantages of this kind cannot have been much more than you have acquired by reading, whereas mine are from an extenſive and pretty intimate knowledge of living characters in ſeveral parts of the world; and it is this ſtrong impreſſion, the reſult of perſonal obſervation, that has led me to write ſo much, and in ſuch various forms, in defence of revelation. If you had only ſeen the Diſcourſes that I delivered in Philadelphia, which are all relative to that ſubject, you muſt have ſeen that I do not want your admonitions or inſtructions upon it.

From a deficiency in point of candour, and I may add of civility, in an addreſs to me, you never mention any of my writings but in language of contempt. "I conſider," you ſay p. 90, "your Hiſtories," (meaning thoſe of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity, and of Early opinions concerning Jeſus Chriſt) as poſſeſſing "no more authority than the Arabian nights Enter-"tainments." As many perſons here, I find, as well as in England, are fond of reading Novels and Romances, I wiſh your readers would, from your account of thoſe Hiſtories of mine, conſider them in that light, and think of reading them for amuſement, as they do the Arabian Nights. They would find in them ſerious matter, worthy of their attention, and of yours. Works of great labour, as theſe are, and compoſed with a ſerious view, to promote what the author conſi-

ders to be important truth, let him be ever ſo much miſtaken, deſerve to be mentioned with reſpect. You could not mean any thing but ridicule and contempt when you ſay p. 47, " May I expect from your exten- " ſive knowledge you will be able to gratify my curio- " ſity with reſpect to the Eleuſinian myſteries." I wiſh, Sir, that you, or any other perſon, would gratify mine on that ſubject.

By way of excuſe for declining to enter into a controverſy with me on the ſubjects of the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt and the atonement, you ſay p. 82, " there is no common principle on which you and I " could argue on thoſe ſubjects. Theſe are doctrines " which can only be diſcovered by the light of pure re- " velation, but you, juſt as it pleaſes you, or as it an- " ſwers your purpoſe, reject or receive what is record- " ed in revelation." You alſo dwell much, and always with a tone of ſarcaſm, on my having expreſſed an opinion that the reaſoning of the apoſtle Paul was ſometimes inconcluſive. You alſo ſay, " If we add " another ſubject of controverſy, it would open too " wide a field, and would afford you an opportunity of " adroitly extricating yourſelf from the abſurdities in- " to which you have run, by flying to another ſubject." This, Sir, is but another variation of the charge of artifice and inſincerity which you ſo often bring againſt me, but it has no juſt foundation.

You and I have many principles in common with reſpect to the doctrines of the divinity of Chriſt and the atonement. There is not a ſingle paſſage in the Old or the New Teſtament relating to them that I would

would wiſh to have expunged. The reaſoning of Paul to which I object does not affect his authority with reſpect to any thing that depends upon his own knowledge, or that he declares that he had in the communications with Jeſus, with which he was favoured. What I object to in his writings you may ſee, if you pleaſe, in my Notes on all the books of ſcripture which are now in the preſs. There is not a word in any of the Goſpels, or the Acts of the Apoſtles, to which I do not give implicit credit. Nor do I recollect a ſingle paſſage of the leaſt moment in all the New Teſtament which I think to be ſpurious, except that concerning the heavenly witneſſes in the firſt epiſtle of John, which if you admit I believe you are ſingular, as it is given up by all the learned in England, and thoſe as orthodox as yourſelf. Nor is this any text of any real conſequence to you, as ſeveral believers in the divinity of Chriſt have acknowledged. The apoſtles, and all the other writers in the New Teſtament, I conſider as perfectly honeſt and excellent men, but not as infallible; and you muſt know that many learned chriſtians have ceaſed to defend their inſpiration as writers; an hypotheſis which candid men allow to be impoſſible to maintain, and which has given the greateſt advantage to unbelievers.

All that you urge on theſe ſubjects, and upon my character as a writer, is only calculated to prejudice your readers againſt me and my writings, as written with a view to deceive them, and draw them into dangerous errors; the natural inferrence from which is that it is moſt ſafe for them not to look into them at all. But, ſir, what ſhould I get by the conduct which you aſcribe

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to me, and which, according to you, I muſt have followed through life, to the cloſe of which I muſt now be very near? Conſequently, I muſt be in expectation of very ſoon appearing before my final judge; with whom the artifice you charge me with will avail nothing. He will, however, be better qualified to decide concerning my character and conduct than you who are ſo ready to do it, and I hope to find him more candid.*

You ſtill maintain, notwithſtanding my ſerious declaration to the contrary (calling it an artful evaſion, but againſt, I think, every appearance and probability) that in my *Comparison of Socrates and Jeſus* I meant, p. 14. "an inſidious attack upon our Saviour." You even ſay, p. 10, that "it proceeded from a ſtable and "implicable animoſity againſt the divinity of Jeſus "Chriſt." To ſhew you in what a different light the ſame thing may be viewed by different perſons, I ſhall give you an extract from a letter which I have lately received from a perſon in England, and as ſincere a chriſtian as yourſelf. "I am excited," he ſays, "and deſi- "rous to ſend you a few lines, to convey my thanks, "for your *Socrates and Jeſus compared*, and my great "approbation of it; By the peruſal of it I have much "profited, as it has led me both to underſtand and va- "lue chriſtianity more and better. This little work is

"calculated

* When I was transcribing this for the press from short hand, in which I always compose, I did not expect to live many weeks. For one whole day, unable to write myself, I employed other persons to write while I dictated. At present my prospects with respect to this life are very uncertain.

" calculated to do, and certainly will do, much good, if " it be attended to. Another correſpondent ſays, " I " have read your Compariſon of Jeſus and Socrates " with much pleaſure. You have placed the great ſu- " periority of the character, and doctrine, of Chriſt a- " bove that of Socrates in a very ſtriking light."

Indeed I cannot help conſidering your ſtrange miſ-apprehenſion of my views in this publication as extraordinary as Don Quixot's miſtaking a windmill for a giant, and a flock of ſheep for an army; and I had no more expectation of ſuch an attack upon it as yours is, than that it would involve me in a conteſt with Buonaparte or the Algerenes. I conſidered myſelf as writing in the cauſe of common chriſtianity, and that, if I ſucceeded, I ſhould have the thanks of all the friends of it; and in this light my pamphlet was conſidered by ſeveral intelligent chriſtians in Philadelphia, and ſome of them as orthodox as yourſelf.

SECTION

SECTION I.

Of Socrates.

THE greater part of your Letter relates to *Socrates*, and you expect a particular reply to every article in it. But, Sir, contrary to your expectation p. 78, where you say, "he must be a credulous opponent "who should ever expect to silence me," I have little more to say about Socrates. Being satisfied with what I have written, notwithstanding your additional observations on the subject, I now close my defence, and leave your observations to have what weight they may with our readers. I see no good reason for troubling them with what appears to me to be wholly unnecessary. I shall, therefore, only make a few brief remarks.

You lay great stress on the imperfection of my account of the *difference* between Socrates and Jesus; when I acknowledge all the difference that I find between them in the fullest manner, at the same time that I saw so much of a general resemblance between them, in their devoting themselves to the instruction of their countrymen on the subject of morals, and that gratuitously, which no other heathen philosopher did, that I thought it well worth while to draw a comparison between

tween them; and this I think is sufficiently to the advantage of Jesus. Yet you now, p. 37, "appeal "to my own reason and heart whether I have not said "unjustly, that the discourses of Socrates and Jesus "have an obvious resemblance." Now I should have thought the resemblance sufficient to my purpose, if Socrates had been a much less respectable teacher than he was. He was the best that the heathen world could exhibit, and I was desirous of shewing that, with all his advantages he was greatly inferior to Jesus. Besides, Sir, comparisons have been made between things the most distant, if there was but the smallest resemblance between them, even between the Supreme Being, as the author of all good, and Satan the supposed author of all evil.

Notwithstanding all that you allege by way of apology for underrating the merit of Socrates, I do not see why you should urge the argument from the abominable idolatries of his countrymen, or the general character that Paul gives of the heathen world, if you had not thought that they affected the character of Socrates individually; and then they will equally affect the character of every heathen, as that of Aristides, Phocion, Timoleon, and any the most celebrated for their moral worth in all Greece. Indeed, with respect to virtue in general, according to the best ideas that the heathens had of it, there is no character known in detail that stands higher than that of Socrates himself. And so inconclusive is your argument, that it must surely be obvious to every person but yourself.

You

You lay as much ſtreſs as ever on the attachment of Socrates to thoſe whom you call his *chosen companions*; but you mention none but ſuch as were his pupils when they were young men, and what tutor may not have unworthy diſciples. For his choſen companions take the following account of Xenophon. After a recital of a converſation that he had with Pericles and Alcibiades he ſays (Memorabilia, Lib. i, Cap. 2. p. 47) "When theſe men took the lead in the commonwealth, "they no longer frequented the ſociety of Socrates, "becauſe it would not have been agreeable to them, "as they would have taken it ill to have been reproved "by him for their faults, but engaged in the conduct "of public affairs, with a view to which only they had "applied to Socrates. But Crito, and Chærephon, and "Cherecrates, and Simmias, and Cebes, and Phædo, "and many others, were the familiar friends of So-"crates; who frequented his ſociety, not as lawyers "or orators, but that they might be good and honoura-"ble men, and be of ſervice to their families, their do-"meſtics, their relations, their friends, the city, and "their fellow citizens. None of theſe, either while "they were young, or advanced in life, did any thing "that was reprehenſible, nor were they ever charged "with it." Indeed Sir, you are not ſufficiently well read in the hiſtory of Socrates.

If you had overlooked this paſſage in the Memorabilia, you might have ſeen who they were that attended Socrates in the laſt ſcenes of his life; and ſuch were moſt likely to have been his intimate friends, and among

mong them you find not one of the perſons that you have mentioned as his choſen companions. Theſe among no doubt, many others, were Crito, Phædo, Simmias, Cebes, Echecrates, Apollodorus, and Plato, of none of whom do we know any thing diſreputable. And why did you lay ſo much ſtreſs on the tyrannical conduct of Critias, if you had not meant to inſinuate that he had in ſome meaſure the concurrence of Socrates, for it was not the character of Critias that was the ſubject of our diſcuſſion.

As to the dæmon of Socrates, on which you urge me ſo cloſely, I profeſſed not to have any fixed opinion about it. If I had been aſked what I thought of it a ſhort time before the writing of my pamphlet, I ſhould have ſaid, as you do, that it was probably nothing more than his own good ſenſe; but on conſidering his character more particularly, I was unwilling to think that ſuch a man would perſiſt through life, and to his dying moments, in telling a lie. And what the Supreme Being might pleaſe to do by or with him, or any man, neither you nor I can tell. But I never ſaid, as you now quote me, that "God ſpake to Socrates by a dæ-" mon," which you call, p. 75, "a glaring deformity of "my aſſertion." Such an idea never occurred to me. As my opinion on this very unimportant ſubject is unſettled, it is very poſſible that I may revert to my former opinion, and yours about it.

With reſpect to the authority of Herodicus, on which you are diſpoſed to lay great ſtreſs, in order to diſparage Socrates, and on which you challenge me ſo peremptorily p. 52, I do not think it worth my while

to

to conſider it at all, my buſineſs being not ſo much with the perſonal character of Socrates as with what he taught, whom he taught, and in what manner he taught. And whether Socrates was a little better, or a little worſe, than he has been repreſented, is of little conſequence to my object in writing, which I am ſorry to find, it is not in my power to make you underſtand.

As I have now abandoned Socrates, you will, of courſe, triumph in your victory, while I ſhall proceed as if this unforeſeen controverſy had never happened, to draw a ſimilar compariſon between Jeſus and other heathen moraliſts, giving them, as I did Socrates, every merit that I fairly can, in order to ſhew that, with every advantage, their maxims were far inferior to thoſe of the Goſpel, and their influence far leſs favourable to the exaltation of the individual character, or the improvement of the condition of ſociety. I ſhall not be ſorry to ſee you follow me ſtep by ſtep through them all, as you have done with reſpect to Socrates, and you will have juſt the ſame reaſon to think that the remainder of the work is what you call this firſt part, viz. an inſidious attack on the character of Jeſus; and with reſpect to ſome of the characters, you may perhaps have more advantage than you have had in the caſe of Socrates. It will be no object with me to give you leſs.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of the Divinity of Christ.

SECOND thoughts, the old proverb says, are best. I am glad, that you, Sir, have had such thoughts, and that you did not, as you first intended, close your pamphlet with your *Letter*, but have added an *Appendix* on the only subjects on which I wished for an opportunity of addressing you, or rather our readers, viz. the doctrines of the *divinity of Christ*, and of *atonement*. These are, indeed, subjects of importance. You think them great truths, and I am as well satisfied that they are the most shocking corruptions of christianity, hindering the reception of it not only with Jews and Mahometans, but with men of sense in all christian countries. I, therefore, think that no rational christian can employ his time better than in an endeavour to expose them. And as you and your learned friend, without wishing to proceed with the controversy, have, nevertheless, thought it incumbent on you to produce those arguments which you consider as of the greatest strength in your cause, I shall endeavour to shew our readers the extreme futility, and the most glaring inconsistency, of them; referring for the farther discus-

ſion of the ſubjects to my former publications with reſpect to them.

You ſay, p. 89, "You appear to lay conſiderable "ſtreſs on the circumſtance that the Jews did not ex-"pect their Meſſiah to be a divine perſon, or that he "would make atonement for ſin. You advert to this "three or four times in the pamphlet to which I am re-"plying. To me it appears not a little wonderful that "you ſhould love to dwell on a circumſtance which fur-"niſhes a ſtrong preſumption againſt your opinion;" urging that becauſe the Jews were generally miſtaken in other things, they probably were ſo in this. Now I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what you do not ſeem to be at all aware of, as you have not even adverted to it, in what manner this miſtake of the Jews makes for my argument, and againſt yours.

We agree that the Jews were miſtaken in their expectation of a temporal prince in their Meſſiah, and that the apoſtles themſelves were under the ſame miſtake till the day of Pentecoſt. But an obvious conſequence of this is that, having no ſuſpicion of their maſter being any thing more than a man, ſuch as David, whoſe deſcendant he was, had been, nothing that they ſay before that event could imply that they thought him to be more than a man; and this entirely deſtroys the force of your boaſted argument, p. 98, from the ſhort exclamation of Thomas, *My Lord and my God.* For the reſurrection of his maſter, however unexpected by him, could be no proof to him, or to any perſon, that he was God. Otherwiſe, the reſurrection of Lazarus would prove *him* to be God. It only ſhewed the power of

er of God in ſuch a miracle ; and to this power the reſurrection of Jeſus was always aſcribed by the apoſtles ever after. To expreſs his ſatisfaction with reſpect to the identity of Jeſus, and the power of God in raiſing him from the dead, was all that Thomas, by your own conceſſion, could poſſibly mean. Indeed, his words make no proper ſentence. He does not ſay, and could not, in his ſtate of mind think, that his Lord and his God was the ſame perſon.

This conceſſion equally invalidates your argument from what Jeſus at any time ſaid to the Jews of his being the ſon of God. "Do you not know," you ſay p. 114, "that the Jews took up ſtones to ſtone Chriſt himſelf for ſaying what they ſuppoſed, and rightly ſuppoſed, implied that he was God? Do you not know that they frequently charged him with blaſphemy? Do you not know that it was under this charge, brought for the very doctrine that I maintain, that they at laſt actually put him to death?"

If on theſe occaſions Jeſus actually ſaid what would amount to a confeſſion that he was God, is it not extraordinary that his diſciples, and eſpecially the apoſtles, who put entire confidence in all his declarations, and who were prediſpoſed to rejoice in any circumſtance that tended to magnify him, did not underſtand him, but continued in perfect ignorance of his pretenſions till the day of Pentecoſt ; eſpecially if he had been publicly tried and condemned for aſſerting his divinity? Could a public ſentence of a court of juſtice, the higheſt in the country, founded upon a man's own confeſſion, have been unknown to any perſon in the country,

much leſs to his own diſciples, who were ſo much intereſted in every thing relating to him?

Theſe, Sir, are ſtrange and moſt improbable ſuppoſitions. Could any one in Judea, and eſpecially one ſo obnoxious as Jeſus was to the chief rulers, who wanted nothing but a plauſible pretence for putting him to death, have eſcaped being ſtoned in any place where he could have been found, after ſeriouſly pretending to be God their maker? Conſider, beſides, the apology that he made for his language, John x, 35, "If he call-"ed them gods to whom the word of God came," (meaning, probably, magiſtrates who are ſometimes ſo called) "and the ſcripture cannot be broken, ſay ye of "him whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into "the world, thou blaſphemeſt, becauſe I ſaid I am the "ſon of God." Do you think that he uſed any artifice on this occaſion, and that finding he had gone too far, he wiſhed to explain away what he had really meant, contenting himſelf with ſaying that he was only the *ſon of God*, a declaration which had been made from heaven at his baptiſm, and which, therefore, was probably well known to the people in general. This, beſides, is a title which the apoſtle John gives to all the diſciples of Chriſt, John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the ſons "of God."

You muſt, ſurely, know that with the Jews the crime of *blaſphemy* was not confined to a man's pretending to be God. No ſuch crime could ever have been thought of. Blaſphemy was puniſhable with death by the laws of Moſes, but ſurely this could not have been the meaning of it by him, for it could not have

have been thought to affect any perſon that was in his ſenſes. Were not Stephen and Paul charged with blaſpheming, but was their ſuppoſed blaſphemy their pretending to be God?

Jeſus was evidently condemned to die for pretending to be the *Meſſiah*, which they thought, or affected to think, a blaſphemous preſumption. That this was the preciſe meaning of Jeſus is evident from the language of his confeſſion. The queſtion put to him was (Matt. 26. 63.) "I adjure the by thee living God, that "thou tell us whether thou be the Chriſt the ſon of "God;" not whether he himſelf was God. And after anſwering in the affirmative, he added, "Nevertheleſs "I ſay unto you, hereafter ye ſhall ſee the ſon of man "ſitting on the right hand of power; and coming in the "clouds of heaven," which, in the opinion of all his judges, was characteriſtic of the Meſſiah. Agreeable to this was their accuſation of him to Pilate, viz. that he made himſelf the *king of the Jews*, and not that he had ever pretended to be God.

Conſider alſo in what manner, and on what grounds the Jews inſulted Jeſus as he hung on the croſs (Luke 23. 31) *And the people ſtood beholding, and the rulers alſo with them derided him, ſaying, He ſaved others, let him ſave himſelf, if he be Chriſt the chosen of God.* This clearly ſhows the ground, and the extent, of the charge that was brought againſt him. For had he ever pretended to be God, and eſpecially if he had been condemned on that account, would not *that* have been mentioned on this occaſion as infiiately more preſumptious and blaſphemous than merely pretending to be the Meſſiah?

He was inſulted alſo by one of the malefactors, who was crucified along with him, but only on the ſame account, v. 39. *And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, ſaying, if thou be the Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us.*

The Jews thought it blaſphemous to pretend to forgive ſins, thinking it was a power that God had never given to man, and therefore that to pretend to be poſſeſſed of it was blaſphemous. But Jeſus ſeems to have ſatisfied his captious audience by working a miracle in vindication of the propriety of his language, and by the words of his anſwer, which implied that it was only ſaying in other words that the ſick man ſhould be reſtored to health, and calling himſelf the *ſon of man* Matt ix. 4: "And Jeſus, knowing their thoughts, ſaid, wherefore "think ye evil in your hearts. For whether is it eaſier "to ſay *Thy ſins be forgiven thee*, or to ſay *arise and* "*walk*? But that ye may know that the ſon of man "hath power on earth to forgive ſins (then ſayeth he to "the ſick of the palſy) ariſe, take up thy bed and go to "thine own houſe." The phraſe *ſon of man*, whatever be the meaning of it, does not ſignify God.

You ſay p. 104. "I cannot miſtake in ſaying that you "hold with me that no Being except God can forgive "ſin." I alſo ſay that no Being except God can work a miracle; but God might empower you or me, either to work a miracle, or to declare a man's ſins to be forgiven, a prophet being nothing more than the inſtrument, or the mouth, of God in the caſe. Jeſus always acknowledged not only that *he could do nothing* of himſelf, but that the *words that he ſpake were not his own, but*

but the Father's who sent him. As the Father giveth me commandment, says he, *so I speak.*

For the same reason, Christ being thought to be the *Immanuel* of Isaiah could not be understood by the Jews, or the disciples of Jesus, to be a prediction that the Messiah would be God, an argument on which you lay much stress p. 98. This was the name of a child in the time of Isaiah, and tho' applied to Jesus, could no more be understood to signify that he was God, than that any other person whose name ended in *el*, which signified God, or that contained in it any other known name of God, was therefore God. Names were given by the Jews to denote any extraordinary circumstance relating to the children themselves, or the times in which they were born. Thus because God had promised to appear in the deliverance of the land of Judah, when it was invaded by the kings of Israel and Syria, this name was given by way of assurance to Ahaz, that God would be wth them, and therefore that they had nothing to fear. Ishmael signifies *God that hears*, Eli, *my God*; Elijah *God and Lord*, Elisha *God the saviour* and *Gabriel* the *power of God;* but was it ever thought that any of these men, or that this angel, was God? Why, then, should the name *Immanuel* imply it?

Mr. Blayney, an English divine as orthodox as yourself, ingenuously gives up this argument for the divinity of Christ in his note on Jer xxiii. 6. which we translate. "And this is the name by which he shall be called. "The Lord our righteousness" and which he renders. "And this is the name by which Jehovah shall call him, *Our righteousness.* Upon this he says "I doubt not

"not but some persons will be offended with me for "depriving them by this translation of a favourite argu- "ment for proving the divinity of our Saviour from the "Old Testament. But I cannot help it. I have done it "with no ill design, but purely because I think, and am "morally sure, that the text as it stands will not proper- "ly admit of any other construction. The LXX have "so translated before me, in an age in which there "could not possibly be any bias of prejudice either for "or against the before mentioned doctrine; a doctrine "which draws its decisive proof from the New Testa- "ment only." From this it is evident that he does not lay the stress that you do on the word *Immanuel*.

The ignorance of the Jews concerning the divinity of their Messiah, also invalidates your argument for it from any person being said to *fall down and worship him*; besides that it is well known that this expression only means stooping so low as to kiss the hem of a person's garment, or at most prostration on the ground before him. Otherwise, David must be concluded to be God, as well as the Supreme Being to whom he prayed. For after his prayer it is said (1 Chron. xxix. 20.) *And all the congregation blessed the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king*. The worship, therefore, that the angels of God are said to pay to Jesus, on which you lay stress, can mean no more than their acknowledging him to be their superior, not that he was their God.

Since we agree in opinion that the apostles considered Jesus as a mere man, tho' a distinguished prophet, till the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, I would

would aſk how it appears that even *after* that event, they thought more highly of him. Peter in his ſpeech on that occaſion, calls him (Acts ii, 22) only *a man approved of God, by miracles and wonders and ſigns which God did by him, and whom God had raiſed up.* The many converts, therefore, that he made by that ſpeech muſt have all been unitarians. For it does not appear that he gave them any information concerning the ſuperior dignity of their maſter. Nor does it appear in all the Acts of the apoſtles, that this communication was made to any of them. And ſurely a circumſtance of ſo extraordinary a nature muſt have excited the greateſt attention.

Would not the Jewiſh rulers, if this had been known to *them* (and if it had been the opinion of the chriſtians in general, they could not have been ignorant that it was ſo) not have been ſhocked, and offended beyond meaſure, at it, as much as if they had heard it from Jeſus himſelf before his death, and would not the whole body of chriſtians have been exclaimed againſt, and conſidered as blaſphemers, on that account? But tho' we well know from this hiſtory, all that the unbelieving Jews objected to the chriſtians in that age, this is never mentioned. They only denied that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and queſtioned the truth of his reſurrection. Would not an opinion of this extraordinary kind have occaſioned ſome diſcuſſion and controverſy even among the chriſtians themſelves, at leaſt as much as the queſtion about the admiſſion of the Gentiles into their churches; and we ſee by this that it was no eaſy matter for the apoſtles themſelves to give them ſatisfaction with reſpect

pect to any thing that ſhocked their prejudices. The new converts who muſt have been inſtructed in the principles of chriſtianity before they were admitted to baptiſm, muſt, if the apoſtles did not ſtudiouſly conceal it from them, have been informed of this article of chriſtian faith; and would none of them have been ſtartled, and have objected to a thing ſo abhorrent to their previous notions and prejudices? And yet we do not find that it was ſo much as noticed by any of them. When the eunuch was converted and baptized, all that Philip required of him was (Acts viii. 37) to confeſs that *Jeſus was the ſon of God*, by which was only meant the Meſſiah.

The doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt is now the principal objection of all the Jews againſt chriſtianity. Why did they not urge it before as well as now, and eſpecially when it was firſt advanced, and therefore muſt have ſtruck them more than it can do now? In fact, this prominent objection to chriſtianity does not appear to have been made to it by any Jew till many years after the age of the apoſtles. But ſince that time it has ever been uppermoſt with them, as it is with all the Mahometans, and was ſo from the time of Mahomet himſelf.

You think that Stephen conſidered Chriſt as God p. 98, when (Acts ix. 57) he *called upon God, ſaying Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.* But if this doctrine was known to Stephen, it muſt have been ſo to all the chriſtians, and could he only have given any intimation of his holding it? And what follows from any perſon ſeeing Jeſus in viſion, and, being about to die, requeſting

ing him to receive his *last breath*, which was an ancient cuſtom with particular friends? Beſides, the accuſation and condemnation of Stephen were upon quite other grounds. The charge againſt him was ſimply this (Acts viii. 14) *This man ceases not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs that Moses delivered to us.* Here is nothing ſaid about his aſſerting that Jeſus was God, which would have appeared to his judges infinitely more blaſphemous than any thing that they alleged againſt him.

If the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt was not communicated to the apoſtles before the day of Pentecoſt, the words of Jeſus in his commiſſion to baptize (Matt. xxviii. 19.) on which you lay ſo much ſtreſs, p. 103. viz. *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, could not imply this. The meaning could only be an initiation into that religion which was the gift of God by Jeſus Chriſt, and confirmed by miraculus powers. For that the term *Holy Ghost* is, as you ſay, another name of God, I do not admit.

Hilary, whom you quote as a defender of the higheſt doctrine of the trinity, interprets this laſt as the Unitarians do; viz. as ſignifying a confeſſion of *the Father, of the only begotten, and of the Gift*, which very much reſembles what Irenæus ſays on the ſubject *.

You ſay, p. 92, that "I cannot any more than the "Jews give a juſt, or even a plauſible, expoſition of the "queſtion

* Baptizari jussit in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti: id est in confessione et authoris, et unigeniti et doni Lib 2. p 22.

"queſtion which Jeſus put to the Jews (Matt. xxii. 45) "*if David called him Lord how is he his Son.*" Now really, Sir, I ſee no difficulty at all in the Socinian interpretation of it. All that the Jews expected in their Meſſiah was that he would reſemble David, be a temporal prince as he was, and reſcue them, as he had done, from the power of their enemies; in which reſpect they could not ſuppoſe him to be ſuperior, or much ſo, to David. On what account he was to be ſuperior to David, Jeſus does not ſay; but ſurely he might be his ſuperior without being God. Jeſus himſelf was greatly ſuperior on the Socinian hypotheſis. Did David act as Jeſus did by an immediate commiſſion from God? Did he work the miracles that Jeſus did? and is he to return, after being raiſed from the dead, and aſcending to heaven, to judge the world? And yet all this may be done without his being himſelf God, if he was only authorized and inſpired by God to do it. David himſelf will be judged by this ſon of his as well as you and I. You ſee, then, that whatever you may imagine we find no difficulty at all in the interpretation of this paſſage. Whether it will appear ſo to you does not much concern us. We ſatisfy ourſelves.

You greatly boaſt, p. 82 and 97, of the great number of texts that you could produce in ſupport of your hypotheſis, which, you ſay, "in numerous, direct, and unequivo-"cal paſſages, aſſert that Chriſt is God; and what is much "more to the point, aſcribe to him acts and attributes "which cannot without bliſphemy be arrogated by any "creature." Theſe texts, however, as you have not recited them, I conſider as ſoldiers on a muſter liſt, which

which never appear in the field. But many perſons, without ſeeing any of the texts themſelves, will take your aſſertion for granted, without any examination at all. In my opinion your direct texts are none, and your plauſible ones very few, and all theſe our readers may find explained in the eaſieſt manner upon unitarian principles, in my *Familiar Illustration of particular texts*, a ſmall and cheap pamphlet, reprinted in this country by Mr. Dobſon, together with my *Appeal to all Chriſtians* on the ſubjects in controverſy between us, to which I am glad that you have given me this opportunity of directing our readers; as alſo to another ſmall pamphlet of mine intitled *A General View of Arguments for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Preexistence of Chriſt, from Reaſon, from the Scriptures, and from Hiſtory.*

What offends you particularly is my ſaying, and I now repeat it, that there is abundant evidence that the opinion of the perfect equality of the Son to the Father was unknown at the council of Nice, and not admitted by Athanaſius himſelf. To this you and your learned friend, reply by appealing to the *Creed of Athanaſius*, and the ſentiments of Hilary. But if you maintain that this creed, tho' aſcribed to Athanaſius, was really written by him, you are, I will venture to ſay, abſolutely ſingular; as it is given up by all who pretend to ſcholarſhip in Europe, the moſt orthodox, as well as others. The Benedictine editors of the works of Athanaſius place this creed among the ſpurious articles aſcribed to him. Cave, the moſt learned in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of any writer in England, ſays of this creed in

"his

his *Historia Literaria*, Vol. i, p. 196, "That this is no "genuine work of Athanasius is evident; because nei- "ther Athanasius himself, nor any succeeding writer "before Theodulph of Orleans, make any mention of "it, nor was it received by the church before A. D. "1000, or much noticed till it was produced by the am- "bassadors of Gregory IX, in A. D. 1233, in a dispu- "tation at Constantinople, when the authority of Atha- "nasius was appealed to." He adds, "that it was pro- "bably composed by Vigilius Tapsensis in Latin, that "it was afterwards translated into Greek, and was "long hid in the archieves of churches. This," he says, "is the more probable, as Theodulph cites this "creed from those works ascribed to Athanasius which "are now certainly known to have been written by Vi- "gilius."

Very fortunately, my copy of the works of Athanasius, which is that of Paris A. D. 1627, escaped the riots of Birmingham, and I find in them passages clearly inconsistent with your opinion of the equality of the Son to the Father. In a confession of faith, written on occasion of the councils of Ariminum and Seleusia, he says, Vol. 1, p. 879, "We do not say that the Son is "unbegotten (αγεννητον) like the Father, and without "origin (αναρχον *) but that he had his origin from "being begotten by the Father, For God is the head "of Christ." He farther says in the same piece, p. 893, "We piously believe that the omnipotent God and

* The word in my edition is αυτον; but the sense evidently αναρχον, and so the Latin translator understood it.

"and Lord begat his Son voluntarily and ſpontaneouſ-
"ly (εκουσιως και εθελονζην) believing what he him-
"ſelf ſays, the Lord created me in the beginning of his
"ways." Does this, Sir, imply an opinion of the Son's equality to the Father, when it is evident that as, in his opinion, the Father produced the Son of his own mere will, he muſt have thought that, if he had pleaſed, he might have had no Son at all? I would adviſe you, and your learned friend to look into my fabulous *Hiſtory of Early Opinions*, where you might have found this paſſage, and many others, of which you ſeem to have little knowledge or ſuſpicion.

With reſpect to your boaſted authority from Hilary, you ſay, p. 112, "Now it unfortunately happens, that "Hilary was characteriſtically a zealous defender of "the orthodoxy of Athanaſius, and the council of "Nice." And ſo, Sir, are you, and your authority is as much to the purpoſe as his. The council of Nice was held A. D. 325. but Hilary flouriſhed in A. D. 354. According to Baronius, Hilary was made biſhop of Poitiers abot A. D. 355. For his oppoſition to the Arian doctrine, which prevailed in the time of Valens, he was baniſhed to Phrygia, and it was in this exile, which continued five years, that he wrote his work on the trinity. *Cave's Historia Literaria*, Vol. I. p 213. How then can his opinion be any proof of the doctrine that prevailed at the time of the council of Nice?

With equal confidence, and no more truth, you boaſt of the prevalence of your principles, notwithſtanding my endeavours, and thoſe of others to overturn them. You ſay, p. 84, that "my *History of the Corruptions of Cdris-*

"*Christianity* has lately fallen from the gigantic graſp "of Horſley, cruſhed into annihilation; and that my "trumpet" p. 82. has been long ſounded; but be aſſured "that in this country your trumpet ſhall never be blown "in triumph." You, ſir, appear to be little acquainted with the ſtate of things in England. You would never elſe have ſaid that I had felt the graſp of your champion Horſley, but rather that he had felt mine, and that on this account he ſhrunk from the controverſy, refuſing even to read my *History of Early Opinions*. I am confident that my works are much more read, and with far more effect, than his. It cannot be denied that the number of Unitarians in England has been much increaſed ſince the commencement of my controverſy with him, and, according to my information, they continue to increaſe far beyond what I ever expected.

In this country there are more Unitarians than you ſeem to be aware of. But, ſurely you muſt have known that in the eaſtern ſtates there are ſeveral congregations profeſſedly Unitarian. At Boſton my fabulous *History of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity*, and other works of mine, have been re-printed. In Philadelphia the number of Unitarians is not inconſiderable, and if they would unite, and form a ſociety, they would appear reſpectable. Even in this place I found ſome Unitarians, and you may ſuppoſe their numbers are not leſſened ſince I came hither. There is in this place another Unitarian preacher beſides myſelf, and his audience is always pretty large. Judging from preſent appearances, I have no doubt but there will be a conſiderable increaſe of Unitarians in conſequence of this controverſy, and

that

that all your endeavours to prevent it will only add to what you lament as the miſchief that has been done.

I cannot help ſmiling when you ſay, p. 107, that "the doctrine of the Trinity is not incredible, that in it "there is nothing impoſſible, nothing contradictory, "and conſidering the great end to be anſwered by it, "nothing improbable. The orthodox faith, therefore, "I do verily think is not only truer and ſafer, than "yours, but much more eaſy to be received." But, Sir, let the two ſchemes be propoſed to a Jew or a Mahometan, or to any perſon that is not a chriſtian. While you maintain that the three perſons in your Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have each of them, ſeparately conſidered, all the attributes of divinity, you certainly believe in *three Gods*, a doctrine which I would not receive on the authority of Paul, or of Jeſus himſelf. And when you ſay that theſe *three* call them *Perſons*, or by whatever name you pleaſe, are *one*, it is as evident a contradiction, and an abſurdity, as can be imagined; as much ſo as that the three perſons of Peter, James, and John, having each of them all the properties of humanity, are nevertheleſs not *three men*, but *one man*. This, Sir, is not the whale ſwallowing Jonah, but abſolutely Jonah ſwallowing the whale.

There cannot poſſibly be any difference between theſe two caſes. If all the properties of humanity make a man, all the attributes of divinity muſt make a God; and therefore if three, or three hundred perſons, having each of them the properties of humanity, make three or three hundred men, the ſame number of perſons poſſeſſed of all the attributes of divinity, muſt

make the ſame number of Gods. And ſhould you be able to find ever ſo many texts of ſcripture from which you ſhould infer ever ſo clearly that there was this multiplicity of gods, I ſhould think myſelf authorized to ſay, without any examination of them, that there muſt be a miſtake either in the texts, or in the interpretation of them; ſince the ſacred writers could never really mean to teach a doctrine ſo repugnant to the uniform tenor of their writings; and ſo evidently contradictory to one on which they always lay the greateſt ſtreſs, viz. that of the *divine unity*.

I wiſh, Sir, you had mentioned any of the *ends* to which you allude as anſwered by theſe ſtrange doctrines, equally inconſiſtent with reaſon and the ſcriptures. Is not the one God and Father of all equal to every thing that is ever aſcribed to divinity? Is he not our creator, our preſerver, and our redeemer alſo? And though no man can of his own authority forgive ſin, ſurely God himſelf can, and this he repeatedly declares that he will do, and without any reference to an atonement or ſatisfaction. Is not his example in this very reſpect recommended to us? Are we not required to *forgive as we ourſelves are forgiven?* But this leads to another ſubject, the laſt that I ſhall touch upon, and that will be very briefly.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the Doctrine of Atonement.

"AN atoning ſacrifice for ſin appears to us," you ſay p. 128, "to have been neceſſary." But Sir, why neceſſary if God can forgive ſin without it; and we think it would be a degradation of the character of the Deity to require it, and inconſiſtent with his acknowledged attribute of *mercy*. For what would be left of his moral character but ſtrict *juſtice*, if for every offence committed againſt him he received a ſufficient ſatisfaction? And yet the mercy of God is the conſtant theme of David, and all the ſaints of the Old Teſtament, and thoſe of the New too. How many verſes in the pſalms end as in a kind of chorus, with *His mercy endureth forever?*

You appeal, p. 119, to the authority of Moſheim for the hiſtory of this opinion. But this weighs nothing with me, who have given much more attention to the progreſs of this opinion, and that of many others, that have a connection with it, than he appears to have done; and I am confident that neither Moſheim himſelf, if he had been living, nor you or your learned friend, would

be able to refute what I have advanced, on the moſt indiſputable authorities, in my hiſtory of it. If your doctrine had been univerſally received, as you maintain that it was, in very early times, how could it have remained a queſtion ſo late as the time of Auſtin, to *whom* the ſatisfaction mentioned in the goſpel was made, or that it would have been ſo generally thought to have been made *by God to the Devil*, into whoſe power men had fallen in conſequence of ſin; and that though God might have reſcued them out of his hands by mere *power*, he choſe to do it according to *juſtice*, giving a fair price for what he obtained, and this price was the blood of his ſon. Strange and abſurd as this ſcheme now appears to us, it is really more plauſible than yours, and more agreeable to the character of the Divine Being, who hereby ſets us an example of juſtice and honeſty.

Before your doctrine of atonement can be firmly eſtabliſhed, you muſt anſwer a query originally put by the famous Mr. Penn, the founder of this ſtate, and a zealous unitarian, in his treatiſe intitled, *The Sandy Foundation ſhaken*, which is that if Chriſt be God equal to the Father, why did he not require ſatisfaction to be made to himſelf as well as the Father? He muſt have been equally offended at the ſins of men, and one of his attributes muſt have been juſtice as well as mercy. In Mr. Penn's own language, and under his title of *Conſequences irreligious and irrational.* "It repreſents the Son "more kind and compaſſionate than the Father; where- "as if both be the ſame God, then either the Father is "as loving as the Son, or the Son is as angry as the "Father."

In

In the days of my ignorance I maintained the doctrine that you now hold. I even left the academy with a belief of the doctrine of atonement in a qualified ſenſe: But the firſt thing that I did after I became a miniſter, and had leiſure, was to collect and write out, every text in the Old or New Teſtament that bore any relation to this ſubject; and the reſult was the cleareſt conviction, which has remained to this day, that the doctrine of atonement, in every ſenſe of the word, is as contrary to the ſcripture, as it is to reaſon.

My MS. on this ſubject was ſhewn by a friend of mine to Dr. Lardner, but without mentioning my name, and he was ſo much pleaſed with it, that he requeſted leave to publiſh it. To this I made no objection, and accordingly he did it, giving it himſelf the following title. "The Scripture doctrine of Remiſſion, which "ſhews that the death of Chriſt is no proper ſacrifice, "or ſatisfaction, for ſin; but that pardon is diſpenſed "ſolely on account of repentance, or a perſonal refor-"mation, of the ſinner." The date of the pamphlet is A. D. 1761. After this I was introduced to the Doctor as the author, and from this time I never failed to viſit him whenever I went to London. Having undertaken to write the *History of the corruptions of Chriſtianity*, and of this article among the reſt, I applied to him (who was unqueſtionably better acquainted with the chriſtian Fathers, than, I believe, any perſon then living) for aſſiſtance; but he was then old, and ſaid he could only refer me to ſome paſſages of St. Auſtin, quoted by himſelf, as to my purpoſe. The laſt time that I ſaw him, I renewed my requeſt, but his faculties had

begun

begun to fail him. However, he took down a bundle of pamphlets, and turning them over, ſhewed me my own, ſaying, "This contains my opinion." When I told him I was the writer, he ſhook his head, and ſaid he took me to be Dr. Harwood. About a year after this he died, at the age, I believe of ninety one. This tract I reprinted with additions in the *Theological Repository*, and I propoſe, if I live, to republiſh it, together with other articles of mine, in that work.

Do not boaſt, Sir, as you are apt to do, that learning and piety are wholly on your ſide. A more reſpectable man than Dr. Lardner, or a man more generally reſpected by all parties, both for his learning and his candour never lived. It was the peruſal of his *Letter on the Logos* that made me an unitarian, but not till after his death. For, like yourſelf, I was pretty tenacious of the faith in which I was originally educated, being firſt a Trinitarian, and then an Arian, but ſince what is commonly called a Socinian, but more properly an Unitarian, as diſtinguiſhed from both Trinitarians and Arians.

As, from what you ſay in this ſecond Letter to me, it is not probable that I ſhall have another opportunity of addreſſing you and the public on the ſubject of the controverſies in which I have been engaged, I wiſh to ſet you right with reſpect to ſome particulars of my hiſtory and conduct, with which you ſeem not to be acquainted, and you may give me what degree of credit you pleaſe.

You think that I have always had the laſt word in controverſy, ſo that it is impoſſible to ſilence me. Now this

this has seldom been the case. It was not so in the unitarian controversy in any period of it, except with respect to bishop Horsley himself. To many others that followed him, I never made any reply; nor did I ever write any defence of my *History of Early Opinions*, confident that it does not want any.

My first tract in controversy was an answer to a most virulent attack upon my principles in general by Mr. Venn, a clergyman of the church of England. To this he never replied; but I was so much assailed by many others of the same principles, and of various denominations, that I thought it necessary to write my *Appeal to the candid Professors of Christianity*, and tho' there were not less than ten answers to this in the first month after its publication, I never wrote a direct reply to any of them, but published my *Familiar Illustration of particular Texts*, as a general answer to all that my adversaries could say. Of the *Appeal* not less than fifty thousand copies had been printed and dispersed before I left England, and there were several editions of it, in different parts of England and Scotland, in which I had no concern. It is not speaking with contempt, as you do, of a publication that will answer it, or prevent its effect.

In the various controversies in which I have been engaged, I have seldom been the assailant; what I wrote having been generally in reply to those who attacked some or other of my publications, especially my *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, and my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. In this country I have engaged in no religious controversy but this with you, tho' Dr. Wharton

Wharton wrote againſt me on the ſame ſubjects, and tho' I rejoice in the opportunity that you have given me to make my ſentiments more generally known (wiſhing to follow the lead of that providence which embraces the ſmalleſt things as well as the greateſt, directing both your pen and mine) I was far from ſeeking, or expecting any ſuch thing.

Tho' I have been a preacher half a century, I never delivered one ſermon that could be called *controversial*, beſides that at Philadelphia; and to this I was urged by its being ſaid that in this country I concealed my ſentiments, and durſt not avow them. I therefore, at the cloſe of my diſcourſes of the evidences of revelation, preached the ſermon intitled *Unitarianism explained and defended.* Before and ſince this all my ſermons have been either practical, or in the defence of common chriſtianity, tho' I never concealed my opinions in the pulpit when any particular occaſion required the mention of them, and eſpecially in my expoſition of the ſcriptures.

Of four of my opponents in controverſy, I gained the friendſhip of three, before unknown to me; and with the other our former friendſhip was much increaſed, at leaſt not at all diminiſhed; ſo that my manner of writing in controverſy has not been ſo offenſive to others as it is to you. But I never charged any of my opponents, as you do me, with "writing againſt light "and better knowledge." I do not believe that any of them did ſo. Indeed, very few perſons, I hope, are ſo abandoned as to be capable of it. Strong prejudices, eſpecially thoſe of early education, the force of which

which I have felt myself, are able to mislead the best understandings, accompanied with the best dispositions; and this Sir, I believe to be your case, and the whole of it.

As an excuse for not continuing this controversy with me, you allege the multiplicity of your ministerial duty. My duty of this kind while I was engaged in all the most important of my controversies, I have reason to think, was more extensive than yours, especially in my catechetical lectures to the different classes of my younger hearers,* in the service of three of the most respectable congregations in England, viz. Leeds, Birmingham, and Hackney, all of which I left in a better condition than I found them, and with such marks of their esteem and affection, as I believe were never exceeded by any congregations to their ministers; as may appear from their addresses to me on our separation.

* I made three classes of the younger part of my congregation; the first to the age of ten or twelve, for whose use I composed my *Catechism for children and young persons*; the second from ten or twelve to sixteen or eighteen, for whom I composed my *Scripture Catechism*, the sole object of this class being an acquaintance with the scriptures; and the third class of young persons from the age of sixteen or eighteen to thirty, beyond which I admitted none. For these I composed my *Institutions of Natural, and revealed Religion*; These classes were generally very full. At Leeds the young men of the highest class were about forty. They were the same at Birmingham, when that of young women of the same age amounted to fifty. This course of instruction generally continued about three years.

Having been requested to give a more particular account of these catechetical lectures, and of my method of conducting them, for the instruction of others who wished to follow my example, I did it in the Preface to my Discourse on entering on the office of pastor to the congregation at Hackney, printed A. D. 1791.

At the same time that I was engaged in this ministerial duty, and these controversies, I had a secondary object in *philosophy*, as you have in *poetry*. It is also to be considered that, besides what a minister owes to his particular congregation, there is something due from him to the cause of common christianity, which is a duty that cannot always be discharged without controversy, as you see in the conduct of many of the most eminent christian ministers of various denominations, from the earliest times to the present; so that the allegation of your ministerial duty is no valid excuse.

I am, Reverend Sir, with real esteem, overlooking every thing unpleasant in your style of controversy, and with every good wish, especially that you may soon come to the knowledge of the great truths that you now oppose, and which (owing to early and deep rooted prejudices) cost me much labour to acquire,

Yours sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, November 11, 1803.

ERRATA.

N. B. *(b)* signifies *from the bottom.*

P. 9 l. 16 *for* any text, *read* a text.
P. 10 l. 16 —— implicable —— implacable.
P. 21 l. 2 *(b)* infiately —— infinitely.
P. 30 Note, *after* evidently, *add* requires.

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